

**NEWS RELEASE****Date:** October 3, 2000**For:** Immediate Release**By:** Vickie B. Mullins

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**4-H Celebrates National 4-H Week and Salutes Volunteers**

Milton, Florida - Across the country, 4-H will celebrate National 4-H Week 2000 Sunday, October 1- Saturday, October 7. National 4-H Week, celebrated annually, provides recognition to the 6.6 million youth involved in 4-H programs and the 6.3 million 4-H volunteers.

Pledging their hands to larger service is a key component to the 4-H philosophy of learning by doing. This year, 4-H made a pledge to America's Promise to strengthen youth participation and youth/adult partnerships in order to build an infrastructure in communities where youth and adults commit to making their communities better places for everyone. 4-H, recognized for its service and volunteer activities has promoted youth volunteerism through its national PSA campaign, "Are You Into It?" In 1999, more than 217,000 youth got involved in volunteerism, service learning and community service nationwide.

During National 4-H Week, 4-H'ers in Santa Rosa County will participate in several different activities including the Santa Rosa County Teen Court where they will serve as jurors, attorneys, bailiff, and clerk. Members of the Santa Rosa County 4-H Citizenship Club will also be assisting with the Teen Court Volunteer Recruitment and Training to be held on October 9.

From ecology to gardening to nutrition, more than 200 4-H volunteers in Santa Rosa County pledge their head, heart, hands and health toward improving their communities and themselves. "By pledging their heads, 4-H volunteers contribute their knowledge and expertise," says Vickie B. Mullins, Santa Rosa County Extension 4-H Coordinator. Whether planning a 4-H Growing Gardeners school garden, teaching

consumer education, how to ride a horse or build a rocket, the skills volunteers bring to 4-H strengthen it and help the young people. "Over and over, volunteers say they concentrate on what they can contribute, yet are amazed at what they gain," says Mullins. "People enjoy volunteering when they're able to make changes in a community that are needed."

4-H volunteers range in age from 13 to well over 70. Many of them, though not all, are 4-H alumni who wish to give back to the organization that they benefitted from. They come from a wide array of economic situations and backgrounds and share the common interest of youth development.

A variety of 4-H volunteer opportunities are available in Santa Rosa County. For more information, contact Vickie B. Mullins, 4-H Coordinator, at the Santa Rosa County Extension Office (623-3868 or 939-1259, ext. 1360). Extension Service programs are open to all people without regard to race, color, sex, age, handicap or national origin.